

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

(The remarks of Ms. ERNST pertaining to the introduction of S. 3836 are printed in today's RECORD under "Statements on Introduced Bills and Joint Resolutions.")

Ms. ERNST. I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The legislative clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

GOVERNMENT SPENDING

Mrs. BLACKBURN. Mr. President, last week, the Senate passed a \$1.5 trillion funding bill that the Democratic majority insisted was full of must-pass, got-to-have-it, can't-live-without-it provisions that the American people were demanding. Unfortunately, the reality of what made it into that bill doesn't match the fantasy my Democratic colleagues conjured up for the cameras.

In reality, this \$1.5 trillion package was another spending spree. It was complete with 4,400 earmarks—4,400 earmarks. Now, these earmarks don't have any Federal nexus. They are not connected to your military post or your Federal highway. These are things for shopping centers and parks and city renovations and—you name it—pet projects. So that is not government funding; that is a Big Government windfall that the American people simply can't afford.

As we all know, an inability to pay for these programs has never stopped this Democratic majority from shoving through their radical and increasingly destructive agenda. By their own admission, the out-of-control spending habits have contributed to decades-high inflation. Imagine that.

What we know is that, in Tennessee, I am talking to people every day. They can't afford food and gas and to pay all of their monthly expenses, but for some reason, my Democratic colleagues think taxpayers will be happy to pay for their pet projects back home—all 4,400 of them. You just can't make this stuff up.

The American people are really confused by this. They are also completely appalled by Joe Biden's refusal to secure the border, his refusal to invest in American energy independence, and his willingness to keep our economy entangled with the Chinese Communist Party. Every one of these points worries them. Yet what really scares them is the President's refusal to discuss any of it: Just don't talk about it. It will go away. Inflation, that is transitory. If gas is too expensive, go buy yourself an electric vehicle. This is just so disrespectful of hard-working men and women.

Joe Biden has caused a lot more problems than he solved during the

first year of his Presidency, and his constant pivots away from life-or-death problems have destroyed what little trust the American people had left in his ability to get the job done.

They like to think that the President cares about what happens to them—the American people, the citizens—but they haven't seen any evidence to suggest that he is thinking about them.

Last week, I was up on the Plateau in Tennessee, talking to Tennesseans about what is going on here in the Senate. Most of what they tell me boils down to one simple truth: From where they are sitting and the news they are watching and the papers they are reading, it is clear that the Democrats have a very aggressive agenda, but they have no vision for the future of this country. They feel like what the Democrats want is control over their daily life, not a vision of a country filled with open doors and opportunity for all. They are not seeing that out of this agenda.

Why, they ask me, do their elected representatives take such drastic measures to do things that make their lives harder, that make their situations worse? They can't figure it out.

Since Joe Biden and the Democrats took control, inflation has skyrocketed. We have become energy dependent on Russia. We have abandoned not one, but two embassies. We high-tailed it out of there. Two embassies, cut and run. Our Border Patrol, they are apprehending known terrorists and MS-13 gang members who are coming into this country. If they are apprehending them, we are getting some but not all. And now we are hearing about Russia going out, going to Iran, saying: Let me have your soldiers for hire; let me have your proxies, the Wagner Group, which is closely aligned with Vladimir Putin.

And all the time, Tennesseans are saying: Well, what about these terrorists trying to come over the southern border? Are they mercenaries? Are they soldiers for hire?

People are raising these issues. And this is all part of what the Democrats have accomplished this year.

The American people tolerate quite a bit from their government, but one thing they won't accept is a President who shrugs his shoulders, runs from the podium, who claims to be a victim of circumstance, who is weak-kneed and refuses to lead.

Even former Obama White House officials have come forward begging the Biden administration to stop the spin, face reality, show some leadership, deal with the situation. This has to be getting embarrassing, even for them.

The American people have spent the past year watching Joe Biden abandon the policies that kept the country from collapsing under the weight of the pandemic. And what has he replaced those policies with? Mandates, lockdowns that have made the country poorer, increased regulation that has stopped oil and gas exploration, increased regula-

tion that is making it tougher on manufacturers, a push for higher taxes—that is what they are doing. And do you know what? It makes people less hopeful. It makes people less free. It gives people fewer options.

See, that is what they are seeing. The Democratic agenda is all about government control of your life. It is an agenda; it is not a vision for this country, for our children, for our grandchildren that is rooted in opportunity for all.

There is only one way to undo this damage and to stop this train that this administration is pushing as hard as they can toward socialism. The President needs to stop the spin. He needs to start listening to what people are saying, people across the country.

Here is the thing: They don't want this President to fail. They don't want him to fail. They don't want this country to fail, so it means that the President is going to have to stop bowing to all of this environmentalism as a religion and climate change as a god. They need to stop that.

They need to see, yes, we need to have an Operation Warp Speed, to be energy independent, pull everybody together—Federal Agencies, the private sector.

We are the United States of America, and if we had the desire, we could do this. We could be energy independent once again. We could stand strong. We could stand strong against Russia, against Iran, against China and the Chinese Communist Party.

What that is going to require is an administration and a Democratic Party that has a vision for the greatness and goodness of this country.

I think that what we have to do is we have to lead the way in saying it is time to show respect for the American people, to listen to what they are telling us, and to make certain that we stand for this country, standing strong for future generations.

I yield the floor.

I suggest the absence of a quorum.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The clerk will call the roll.

The bill clerk proceeded to call the roll.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the order for the quorum call be rescinded.

The PRESIDING OFFICER (Mr. BENNET). Without objection, it is so ordered.

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent to be able to complete my remarks.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

ENERGY

Mr. CORNYN. Mr. President, as all of America knows, prices at the gas pump are skyrocketing. Over the weekend, the average gas price in Texas exceeded \$4 a gallon, and we typically have some of the cheapest gasoline in the country. We didn't even cross that line during the great recession of 2008. But we know that gas prices are not the only

commodity that is growing and that family budgets are strained by. Consumers are also paying more for everything from groceries to clothes, to appliances.

Folks in Texas and across the country want to know, what is President Biden's plan to address high gasoline prices? Last week, the President was, appropriately enough, asked this very question. His response? He said:

Can't do much right now. Russia is responsible.

That is a quote—"Russia is responsible." Well, people across the country know that the price of gasoline, the spike that we are experiencing now, preceded the invasion of Ukraine.

Folks across the country can't afford to fill up their gas tanks to get to work, and the President points the finger at Vladimir Putin. Well, there is no question that the war in Ukraine exacerbated what was already an existing problem with the price of gasoline, but certainly it was not the cause of it. But the President conveniently omits the fact that gasoline prices were a problem long before Ukraine was attacked. For example, the week the President took office, Americans were paying an average of \$2.38 a gallon. Month after month, those prices steadily climbed. By mid-May, the average price exceeded \$3.10 a gallon, and by Thanksgiving, it was \$3.30 a gallon. Just as a reminder, this was months before Russia invaded, which did not happen until February 24 of this year. Even in the last full week before the invasion, gas prices were painfully high at \$3.50 a gallon.

So, yes, prices have risen since the invasion, and there is no question that the Russian aggression is a factor behind price jumps in the past few weeks, but this was a preexisting problem for which apparently the President had no solution. It is disingenuous for the administration to blame recordbreaking prices entirely on Russia. During Biden's first year in office, from January of last year to January of this year, gas prices increased 40 percent—40 percent. Those increases had nothing to do with President Putin and had everything to do with President Biden.

One of the President's first actions after taking office was to cancel the Keystone XL Pipeline. This pipeline would have given Canadian crude a quick and affordable path to refiners and processors in the United States and then to global markets through the Gulf of Mexico. This increased supply would add to the domestic markets and top off the Strategic Petroleum Reserve and even make its way to our friends and allies overseas. Given the state of the world's energy security today, it is easy to see how the Keystone XL Pipeline would have helped if the President had given it an opportunity.

This project would have also brought serious economic gains in the form of good-paying jobs right here in America, increased tax revenue, and benefits

for communities along the pipeline's route. But with the stroke of a pen, the President killed the Keystone XL Pipeline and the many benefits that would have been provided in terms of our energy security and the price of gasoline at the pump.

Unfortunately, that was the beginning but not the end of the administration's flawed energy policies. Just a few days later, the Biden administration placed a temporary moratorium on all new leasing permits on Federal lands, effectively sending more business to Russia and OPEC producers whom he actually called upon to produce more oil. That is right. Before the Russian invasion, President Biden called on OPEC—of which Russia is a member and of which Saudi Arabia is a dominant producer—to produce more oil overseas rather than to unleash American energy right here at home.

Well, the administration later attempted to set the "social cost" of carbon, as they call it, at \$51 a metric ton—a high and arbitrary figure designed to hamper fossil fuel production right here at home—and then it suspended oil and gas production in both Alaska and New Mexico.

The administration even took aim at refiners. The United States relies on an expansive network of refiners to supply gasoline, diesel fuel, and other petroleum products. The renewable fuel standard requires refiners to blend a certain amount of renewable fuel, which is simply untenable for many small refiners. And small refiners disproportionately actually produce gasoline, which means that the pressure on these small refiners actually has a disproportionate impact on higher gasoline prices.

The Environmental Protection Agency has the authority to grant temporary exemptions to small refiners if compliance would cause them to suffer serious economic hardship. Those exemptions used to be pretty standard practice. President Obama and President Trump each granted dozens of exemptions while in office. But so far, President Biden has refused to grant a single exemption to small refineries. Small refineries are hurting, and unless President Biden finally grants some of these exemptions, some of them may be forced to close their doors, exacerbating again high energy prices. If fewer refiners are operating, gasoline prices will go up, not down.

President Biden and his administration aren't the only ones who have taken aim at oil and gas production here in America in the last year. Many of our colleagues who have argued that oil and gas production is somehow unnecessary or obsolete and could be replaced today with solely renewable energy have been misleading the American people in believing that we could make that transition today or anytime in the near future. While renewable energy is an important part of our energy sources—in Texas, we produce more electricity from wind than any other

State in the Nation—we believe in an "all of the above" energy policy.

I actually have heard members of the administration say one of the solutions for eliminating the importation of Russian oil would be to move entirely to renewables. Well, the Energy Information Administration, which is the official spokesman on these matters for the U.S. Government, says that by the year 2050, 74 percent of our energy sources in America will still be fossil fuel. That is four times the amount of energy that can be produced by renewables.

That doesn't mean we are going to stay stuck on where we are now. We will continue to look for new and innovative ways to add to our energy diversity and improve our climate and environment at the same time. But to suggest disingenuously to the American people that one way we can deal with cutting off Russian imports is simply to do away with oil and gas in America is a ludicrous statement.

Other regulatory measures promoted by the administration have also discouraged American energy production, like the reckless tax-and-spending spree to pile even more costs and regulations on American oil and gas; for example, a methane tax on energy companies, banning offshore drilling, increasing onshore royalty fees, and putting domestic oil and gas producers in a choke hold.

Now that gas prices have gone through the roof, some of our colleagues have come up with another unhelpful solution. They want to temporarily suspend the gas tax through November, which happens to be the elections. That is no coincidence. This idea has been soundly rejected a number of times over the years by both Republicans and Democrats.

In 2008, gas prices were soaring and the then-Presidential candidate, Barack Obama, attacked his opponents for endorsing a gas tax holiday, as many of our colleagues here in the Senate have endorsed currently.

At the time, Candidate Barack Obama, Senator Barack Obama, said:

This isn't an idea designed to get you through the summer, it's an idea designed to get [you] through an election.

In short, this isn't a fix for high gas prices; it is a talking point for political campaigns and candidates.

This is a gimmick to create the illusion of action, while really doing nothing but draining the highway trust fund that we rely upon to build our roads and bridges.

Still, a few of our colleagues in the Senate have offered a bill that would suspend the gas tax through the end of the year. I am sure it comes as no surprise that a majority of the bill's sponsors are on the ballot this year.

For more than a year now, Republicans have warned about the potential consequences of the attack on domestic energy production. We have highlighted the ways the policies could

drive up prices, harm our energy security, and threaten that of our allies. Even as gas prices rose month after month, the Biden administration did nothing. They didn't attempt a mid-course correction. They didn't open this topic up for debate. They just stayed the course.

Back in November, the Secretary of Energy was asked about increasing U.S. oil production. She literally laughed and said:

That is hilarious.

Well, it certainly isn't funny now. Gas prices are now averaging \$4.32 a gallon, and our allies are frantically trying to reduce their reliance on Russian oil and gas, which in many cases is their sole source.

President Biden has tried to pin these problems squarely on Russia and Vladimir Putin, but the American people are smart. They know the truth. They know that high prices predated Russia's invasion of Ukraine, and they know about the war being waged on domestic energy production by some of our colleagues across the aisle.

And they are smart enough to know that you can't believe President Biden when he says you can't do much about it because Russia is responsible.

I yield the floor.

RECESS

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Under the previous order, the Senate stands in recess until 2:15 p.m.

Thereupon, the Senate, at 12:32 p.m., recessed until 2:15 p.m. and reassembled when called to order by the Presiding Officer (Ms. SINEMA).

EXECUTIVE CALENDAR—Continued

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Rhode Island

UNANIMOUS CONSENT AGREEMENT

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the cloture motion on Executive Calendar No. 718 be withdrawn and that following disposition of the Young nomination, the Senate resume legislative session and proceed to the consideration of Calendar No. 305, S.J. Res. 37, with Senator PAUL or his designee in control of 30 minutes and the majority leader in control of the remaining time until 5:30 p.m., and that at 5:30 p.m., all remaining time on the joint resolution be yielded back, the joint resolution be read a third time, and the Senate vote on passage of the joint resolution without intervening action or debate.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

CLOTURE MOTION WITHDRAWN

The cloture motion on the nomination of Susan Tsui Grundmann, of Virginia, to be a Member of the Federal Labor Relations Authority for a term of five years expiring July 1, 2025, was withdrawn.

Mr. WHITEHOUSE. I yield the floor for a, I hope, happy event to my colleague Senator RUBIO.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. The Senator from Florida.

SUNSHINE PROTECTION ACT OF 2021

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, let me cut right to the chase here before I get into a statement.

As if in legislative session, I ask unanimous consent that the Committee on Commerce, Science, and Transportation be discharged from further consideration of S. 623, a bill to make daylight saving time permanent, and the Senate proceed to its immediate consideration.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The clerk will report the bill by title.

The senior assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A bill (S. 623) to make daylight saving time permanent, and for other purposes.

There being no objection, the committee was discharged and the Senate proceeded to consider the bill.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, I ask unanimous consent that the Rubio substitute at the desk be considered and agreed to; that the bill, as amended, be considered read a third time and passed; and that the motion to reconsider be considered made and laid upon the table.

The PRESIDING OFFICER. Is there objection?

Without objection, it is so ordered.

The amendment (No. 5000) in the nature of a substitute was agreed to as follows:

(Purpose: In the nature of a substitute)

Strike all after the enacting clause and insert the following:

SECTION 1. SHORT TITLE.

This Act may be cited as the "Sunshine Protection Act of 2021".

SEC. 2. MAKING DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME PERMANENT.

(a) REPEAL OF TEMPORARY PERIOD FOR DAYLIGHT SAVING TIME.—Section 3 of the Uniform Time Act of 1966 (15 U.S.C. 260a) is hereby repealed.

(b) ADVANCEMENT OF STANDARD TIME.—

(1) IN GENERAL.—The second sentence of subsection (a) of section 1 of the Act of March 19, 1918 (commonly known as the "Calder Act") (15 U.S.C. 261), is amended—

(A) by striking "4 hours" and inserting "3 hours";

(B) by striking "5 hours" and inserting "4 hours";

(C) by striking "6 hours" and inserting "5 hours";

(D) by striking "7 hours" and inserting "6 hours";

(E) by striking "8 hours" and inserting "by 7 hours";

(F) by striking "9 hours" and inserting "8 hours";

(G) by striking "10 hours;" and inserting "9 hours;";

(H) by striking "11 hours" and inserting "10 hours"; and

(I) by striking "10 hours." and inserting "11 hours."

(2) STATE EXEMPTION.—Such section is further amended by—

(A) redesignating subsection (b) as subsection (c); and

(B) inserting after subsection (a) the following:

"(b) STANDARD TIME FOR CERTAIN STATES AND AREAS.—The standard time for a State that has exempted itself from the provisions of section 3(a) of the Uniform Time Act of 1966 (15 U.S.C. 260a(a)), as in effect on the day before November 5, 2023, pursuant to such section or an area of a State that has exempted such area from such provisions pursuant to such section shall be, as such State considers appropriate—

"(1) the standard time for such State or area, as the case may be, pursuant to subsection (a) of this section; or

"(2) the standard time for such State or area, as the case may be, pursuant to subsection (a) of this section as it was in effect on the day before November 5, 2023."

(3) CONFORMING AMENDMENT.—Such section is further amended, in the second sentence, by striking "Except as provided in section 3(a) of the Uniform Time Act of 1966 (15 U.S.C. 260a(a)), the" and inserting "Except as provided in subsection (b),".

(c) EFFECTIVE DATE.—This Act and the amendments made by this Act take effect on November 5, 2023.

The bill (S. 623) was ordered to be engrossed for a third reading, was read the third time, and passed.

Mr. RUBIO. Madam President, as the day goes on, I look forward to others who will be coming to the floor here in a moment. You will see it is an eclectic collection of Members of the U.S. Senate in favor of what we have just done here in the Senate, and that is to pass a bill to make daylight saving time permanent.

Just this past weekend, we all went through that biannual ritual of changing the clock back and forth and the disruption that comes with it. And one has to ask themselves after a while: Why do we keep doing it? Why are we doing this?

This really began back in 1918 as a practice that was supposed to save energy, and since then we have adjusted it.

Today, daylight saving time, which started out as 6 months, was extended to 8 months in 2005, clearly showing you what people's preference was. So we are doing this back-and-forth of clock-changing for about 16 weeks of standard time a year.

Now, I think the majority of the American people's preference is just to stop the back-and-forth changing. But beyond that, I think their preference is, certainly, at least based on today's vote and what we have heard, is to make daylight saving time permanent.

I will just tell you a couple of the reasons why I think that is important. There is some strong science behind it that is now showing and making people aware of the harm that clock-switching has. We see an increase in heart attacks and car accidents and pedestrian accidents in the week that follow the changes.

The benefits of daylight saving time have also been accounted for in the research; for example, reduced crime, as there is light later in the day. We have seen decreases in child obesity, a decrease in seasonal depression that many feel during standard time, and then the practical one and the one that I have witnessed with my own eyes.